



RELAXATION EXERCISES

Relaxation should be part of the exercise unit. We should learn to release our muscles. We can command the striped muscles with our own will. It depends only on us how we are able to release the tension in our body. Therefore we can divide relaxation into two parts. We can apply it through the first signal system, which is easier to master. We must learn to feel the contrast between tension and release. It is more difficult to do it through the second signal system because it is concerned with deliberate release of tension – tension in the striped muscles.

So, how can we induce relaxation through the first signal system?

Lying on the back with bent knees, your feet at the width of your hips, your back stretched on the mat. Stretch your head, draw the chin to your neck, (if necessary, put the folded towel under your head). Close your eyes and breathe through your nose.

2:11

Both your arms along your body, start with your dominant arm (if you are right-handed, with your right arm). Breathing in clench your fist, feel the tension, and breathing out release it. Only one arm works – breathing in clench your fist, breathing out release it. Repeat several times and then do the same with the other hand.

3:40

Continuing the exercise with upper limbs you can develop it further. Again focus on our dominant arm. Breathing in, bend it in the elbow, your fingers directly towards your shoulder, clench the fist again and feel the tension. Breathing out release the fist and the whole arm. Your forearm will go down thanks to the Earth's gravity and weight of the limb (the forearm will actually hit the mat). Repeat several times and do the same with your other arm.

5:34

Now continue with both arms. Breathing in clench your fists, feel the tension in both arms, breathing in release them. Breathe through your nose and repeat several times.

6:15

Continue with the other motion. Breathing in bend both elbows, clench the fists at the shoulders, feel the tension, which goes into your chest. Breathing out release the tension and the arms will fall to the mat. Repeat several times.

6:46

Leave your arms relaxed and stretch your dominant leg. Your leg is stretched but there is no tension in it. Breathing in draw the tip of your foot to the shin, feel the tension in the whole leg. Breathing out release the tension. Repeat several times, then bend the leg, put the foot on the mat and stretch your other leg and do the same.

8:05

Now stretch both of your legs. Your arms are relaxed, only the tips of your feet and the muscles of your legs work. Draw both tips of your feet to the shins, feel the tension, which goes into your whole legs. Breathing out release the tension and repeat it several times.



8:50

Bend your legs, move them from side to side like pendulum – shake the muscles, feel the movement of the calves and thighs. Leave your legs bent, both your loins and cervical spine got released.

9:40

Start again working with your upper limbs. Shake both your arms on the mat and leave them there. When you exercise strain on your arms, in the relaxing phase shake them to release the tension.

10:20

Still working with the first signal system, it is necessary to realise the contrast between tension and release. Breathing in put your dominant arm forward (to the ceiling), shake it and breathing out release it. It is not a conducted motion. Your arm must get relaxed both in the shoulder and your elbow and wrist and it practically falls down to the ground by its own weight and through the Earth's gravitation, totally relaxed in all its joints. Repeat it and then leave it relaxed. Do the same with your other arm. Then release both of your arms at the same time – put them forward, shake and relax.

12:26

If the contrast between the tension and relaxed state is well understood, you can release the whole body standing. So stand up slowly and straighten your body, your legs slightly apart. Release the whole body by pendular movement. First start with the dominant arm. Swing it along your body while bending and stretching your knees. Do the same with your other arm. And then do it with both arms - put them forward and backward and stretch and bend your knees at the same time.

13:51

Now make a mistake. Leave the arms tight, do not bend your knees and do the same movement. Put your arms forward, stop, backward, stop. This is not release, but conducted movement. If we want to relax we must release all the joints and feel the difference.

14:28

Now let us work with the second signal system and make use of the autogenic training according to Schulz. You can apply it in various forms. So we do it either in position on your back or position of a coachman sitting on the coach box.

14:53

Choosing position on your back, your legs stretched and a bit apart, your arms along your body. Press your hand on the little finger sides into the mat and then release them. With relaxing your shoulders your palms turn to the ground or to the ceiling. It is a fact that while lying on your back with your legs stretched, it is impossible to relax your joints completely. Your joints must be relaxed from the previous exercises. The same with your muscles, which are around your joint shortened and contracted, must be stretched. Otherwise the tension stays in. The best release of the joint tension can be achieved by semiflexion, when the joint is half – bent (50 percent).

16:32

It is possible to apply autogenic training according to Schulz. You are a self-trainer. Consciously relax your body. Transfer attention to your dominant arm and release it. Step by



step release tension in your fingers, in your palm and the upper side of your hand, wrist, forearm muscles, your elbow, upper arm and your shoulder. Feel your arm, feel its weight. The arm is heavy and relaxed.

17:42

Transfer your attention to your other arm and release your fingers one by one. Then your palm, the upper side of your hand, wrist, muscles of your forearm, elbow, the upper arm and your shoulder. Both your other arm is heavy and relaxed.

18:20

Start with your arms as they are closer to your brain, to your head and so you can feel the release better than in your legs. Now focus your attention on your dominant leg. Continuously release your toes, sole and the instep, ankle, calf, your knee, the thigh and the hip. Your dominant leg is heavy and relaxed.

19:26

Focus your attention on the other leg. Release your toes, sole, and the instep, the ankle, your calf, your knee, the thigh and your hip. Both your second leg is heavy and relaxed. All of your four limbs are relaxed.

20:13

Focus your attention on the front part of your trunk and release the abdominal wall, the abdominal muscles. Release the tension in the breast muscles.

20:31

Focus your attention on the back part of your trunk and release the tension in your back. Release individual motion segments on your backbone. The motion segment consists of two vertebrae and deep intrinsic muscles between them. Release the tailbone and the sacrum. Release the area where the lumbar vertebra joins the sacrum – it is the most mobile and critical place on your spine. Go further and release 5 lumbar vertebrae, all of the 12 thoracic vertebrae and to the cervical spine. Release the border between thoracic and cervical spine – the seventh cervical vertebra is best found and it is also a critical place. Then go further to the first cervical vertebra. Release the tension mainly in the surface muscles around the spine.

20:54

Now release your head. Release tension in your front, your temples, the circular muscles around your eyes (orbicularis oculi) and around your mouth (orbicularis oris). Feel the whole of your body, which is heavy and relaxed.

23:37

Methodically, you have to practise relaxation through the second signal system step by step. In the first lesson learn to release your dominant arm, which does not take longer than one minute. Train it maximally for 3 minutes, because then the tension of the whole body increases instead decreasing. In the following lessons, add releasing of the other arm, and then of both ones. Then add another limb, the second one and then the whole body. Check the relaxation process, the conscious release even through the first signal system.